

Message Text

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S E C R E T CAIRO 188 1

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, JO

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN STATE

REF: CAIRO 1849

1. DURING MY CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER UNDER SECRETARY SHOUKRI ON JUNE 23, I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE THE SUBJECT OF EGYPTIAN POLICY TOWARDS A PALESTINIAN STATE. SHOUKRI DENIED THAT THE STATEMENTS BY FOREIGN MINISTER ZAYYAT AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND AT COPENHAGEN INDICATED ANY NEW DEPARTURE IN EGYPTIAN POLICY. HE SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF THE PALESTINIANS HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE CENTRAL ISSUE IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT AND THAT EGYPT'S POLICY HAD ALWAYS BEEN THAT THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD HAVE A RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION. IT WAS UP TO THE PALESTINIANS TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN FUTURE.

2. I ASKED HIM WHY FOREIGN MINISTER ZAYYAT HAD MADE NO MENTION OF THE FACT THAT THE WEST BANK WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE PART OF JORDAN AND HE REPLIED THAT ZAYYAT HAD FELT THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO TAKE A SOMEWHAT MORE HISTORIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM. SINCE EGYPT HAD

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RECOGNIZED THE RIGHT FOR A NATIONAL HOME FOR THE JEWISH RESIDENTS OF PALESTINE, IT WAS NOW TIME TO THINK ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF THE NON- JEWISH RESIDENTS TO A HOME OF THEIR OWN. IN FACT, ZAYYAT' S STATEMENTS DID NOT DIFFER ALL THAT MUCH FROM KING HUSSEIN' S OWN POSITION SINCE THE KING HAD PROMISED THE PALESTINIANS THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE AN AUTONOMOUS PALESTINIAN STATE IF THIS WAS WHAT THE PALESTINIANS DESIRED. SHOUKRI ALSO EXPRESSED ANNOYANCE OVER TAKOAH' S TACTIC OF MAKING TROUBLE BETWEEN JORDAN AND EGYPT AND SAID HE THOUGHT IT VERY INAPPROPRIATE FOR A COUNTRY THAT IS IN MILITARY OCCUPATION OF THE WEST BANK TO ARGUE THAT SOME OTHER COUNTRY IS TRYING TO DISMEMBER JORDAN.

3. COMMENT: DESPITE SHOUKRI' S NOT UNEXPECTED DENIAL OF A NEW EGYPTIAN POLICY, IT SEEMS TO US THAT EGYPT IS NOW PAYING MORE PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THIS QUESTION THAN IT HAS IN THE PAST AND IS BEING MORE SPECIFIC IN ITS SUPPORT FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE. IT ALSO APPEARS TO US THAT THESE PUBLIC STATEMENTS ARE COUCHED IN A MANNER TO EXERT PRESSURE ON KING HUSSEIN AND TO INCREASE EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE WITH THE PALESTINIANS AS REPORTED IN CAIRO 1849.

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